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DEPT PASS TO MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME COLLECTIVE

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [MTCR](#) [ETTC](#) [IN](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE NOT BUYING BRAHMOS MISSILES; DOWNPLAYS
PROLIFERATION CONCERNS

REF: A. STATE 224831

[1](#)B. DAO SANTIAGO IIR 6817 9977 06

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Emi L. Yamauchi for
reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Post delivered ref A demarche to Claudio Ortiz, advisor to the Minister of Defense, and to Francisco Bernales, Deputy Director Special Policies Directorate at the MFA, on December 15. Both reiterated the GOC's earlier assurances that the GOC and Chilean military do not intend to procure the Brahmos missile system (ref B). The Chilean Navy is committed to the Harpoon Block II and will be looking to increase its stock of Harpoons. That said, Ortiz and Bernales were unconvinced that an introduction of the Brahmos in the region would present a serious threat to regional stability.

[1](#)2. (C) Ortiz, who said he was close to the negotiations, said the reports of GOC interest in the Brahmos system were "Indian propaganda." While India is interested in selling the Brahmos, the technology does not compare with the Harpoon missile. He reiterated that the Harpoon Block II was the missile of choice for the Chilean Navy. Ortiz said the Brahmos was "old technology," and that its extended range and greater payload would not be a concern to Chile should other countries acquire it. The only proliferation issue, in his point of view, would be if a country outfitted the missile with a non-conventional warhead to deliver chemical, biological or radiological payloads. Ortiz said any arms sale in the region was destabilizing to some extent, but the Brahmos was not of particular concern to Chile.

[1](#)3. (C) The Foreign Ministry's Bernales said the MFA was neither involved nor consulted in military procurement decisions and said he did not have specific knowledge of the Brahmos deal. Although the MFA was pressing for a role in the process, the MFA's concern was more "where the military buys rather than what they buy." Bernales said the GOC would continue to look at a wide range of military procurement options, partly because the U.S. continued to be perceived as a "fickle partner," making reference to the 1970s Kennedy-Harkin Amendment and the American Servicemember's Protection Act. Bernales said the GOC was concerned that the U.S. Congress could intervene in the military procurement relationship "at any time," including if the next Chilean administration leaned more to the left.

[1](#)4. (C) Bernales added he did not believe the Brahmos represented a bona fide proliferation threat. He asked whether it exceeded Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) limitations, and noted the Harpoon missile system could also be used to strike littoral targets.

15. (C) Comment: High-level military procurement officials and civilian government officials have told us separately that Chile is not interested in the Brahmos system. Boeing representatives recently told us the GOC is close to signing a deal to retrofit the Chilean Navy's flagship, the Almirante Williams, with a Harpoon II launch and control system.
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